

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1. (Currently amended) A method for mass-producing cooked eggs, the method comprising:

dropping an egg having a yolk and a white through a device to break the yolk sac, wherein the device comprises one or more depressions including a plurality of segments having sharp edges and/or pointed portions to rupture the yolk sac, the segments are separated therebetween and extend downward to form an opening to allow the egg to pass through, an orifice having sharp inwardly protruding edges and wherein the orifice is sized to spread the yolk to create the look of a fried egg having a broken yolk;

depositing the egg into a mold, wherein the mold has an irregular shaped peripheral boundary;

cooking the deposited egg in the mold;

removing the cooked egg from the mold; and

cooling the cooked egg below room temperature.

2. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 1, in which the egg includes whole eggs, in which the depositing includes depositing the whole eggs.

3. (Withdrawn) A method as in claim 1, in which the egg product includes whole eggs having intact yolks, in which the depositing includes depositing the whole eggs having intact yolks.

4. (Withdrawn) A method as in claim 1, in which the egg product includes whole eggs having essentially all intact yolks, in which the depositing includes depositing the whole eggs having essentially all intact yolks.

5 - 11. (Canceled)

12. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 1, wherein dropping an egg comprises dropping a plurality of eggs and wherein the mold is arranged side to side along a width dimension and end to end along a length dimension with a plurality of other molds, and in which the depositing includes depositing the plurality of eggs along the width into the plurality of molds at substantially the same time.

13. (Original) A method as in claim 12, in which the depositing includes depositing the plurality of eggs along the width while the molds are moving along the length dimension.
14. (Original) A method as in claim 1, in which the method includes breaking the egg shells while the whole eggs are spaced a first distance apart from each other, followed by diverting the broken egg contents in the width dimension to a second distance apart from each other to drop into the molds.
- 15 – 17. (Canceled)
18. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 1, wherein the mold has a first depression and a second depression disposed within the first depression, wherein the depositing includes depositing the egg products into the first and second depressions.
19. (Withdrawn) A method as in claim 18, wherein the egg product includes whole eggs having intact yolks, wherein the depositing includes depositing the whole eggs and allowing the yolks to settle into the second depression.
20. (Previously Presented) A method as in claim 18, wherein the mold includes a bottom surface having a depth that varies irregularly over the bottom surface.
21. (Currently amended) A method for breaking egg yolks comprising:
dropping an egg having a yolk and a white through a device for rupturing the egg yolk sac, wherein the device comprises one or more depressions including a plurality of segments having sharp edges and/or pointed portions to rupture the yolk sac, the segments are separated therebetween and extend downward to form an opening to allow the egg to pass through an orifice having sharp inwardly protruding edges and wherein the orifice is sized to spread the yolk to create the look of a fried egg having a broken yolk.
- 22 – 23. (Canceled)
24. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 22, in which the device has a plurality of depressions orifices and can receive a plurality of egg yolks simultaneously.
25. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 22, in which the device has a plurality of depressions orifices arranged in a side by side pattern.
26. (Currently Amended) A method as in claim 23, in which the device has a plurality of depressions orifices each disposed in a downwardly extending plate portion.
- 27 – 34. (Canceled)
35. (Withdrawn) A device for depositing cracked, liquid whole eggs comprising:

an egg breaking device comprising a plurality of vertically oriented egg carrying carousels, wherein the egg carrying carousels each have a plurality of egg carriers rotatably disposed around a horizontal axis, further comprising an egg shell breaking knife for breaking the egg shells while in the egg carriers, further comprising an egg yolk breaking device disposed under a portion of each carousel.

36. (Withdrawn) A device as in claim 35, in which the egg yolk breaking device includes a plate having a depression having an orifice with sharp edges for rupturing the egg yolk sac.

37. (Withdrawn) A device as in claim 35, in which the egg yolk breaking device has an orifice for receiving a falling liquid whole egg and having sharp edges for rupturing the egg yolk sac of the falling egg yolk.

38. (Withdrawn) A device as in claim 35, further comprising a belt having a length dimension and a width dimension adapted to move in the length dimension, in which the belt includes a plurality of egg molds including a plurality of egg receiving depressions oriented along the width dimension, in which the mold depressions have an irregular shaped outline.

39. (Withdrawn) A device for cooking cracked, liquid whole eggs comprising:

an egg breaking device comprising a plurality of vertically oriented egg carrying carousels, wherein the egg carrying carousels each have a plurality of egg carriers rotating around a horizontal axis, further comprising an egg shell breaking knife for breaking the egg shells while in the egg carriers; and

a conveyor having a length dimension and a width dimension adapted to move in the length dimension, in which the conveyor includes a plurality of egg molds including a plurality of egg receiving depressions oriented along the width dimension, wherein the conveyor is disposed under the egg breaking device to capture falling liquid egg from the egg breaking device.

40. (Withdrawn) A device as in claim 39, further comprising a cooking oven to receive the moving conveyor having the egg in the conveyor depressions.

41. (Withdrawn) A device as in claim 39, in which the depressions have an irregular shaped outline.

42. (Withdrawn) A device as in claim 39, further comprising an egg yolk breaking device disposed between the egg breaking device and the mold depressions to break the egg yolks.

43. (Withdrawn) A device as in claim 39, further comprising egg detectors disposed between the egg breaking device and the mold depressions to deflect falling liquid eggs laterally to fall into the mold depressions.
44. (Withdrawn) A device as in claim 42, in which the egg yolk breaking device includes a plate having a depression having an orifice with sharp edges for rupturing the egg yolk sac.
45. (Withdrawn) A device as in claim 42, in which the egg yolk breaking device has an orifice for receiving a falling liquid whole egg and having sharp edges for rupturing the egg yolk sac of the falling egg yolk.
46. (Withdrawn) A cooked, cooled egg product comprising:
a plurality of cooked egg products having an irregular shaped outline, in which a substantial portion of the eggs have the same irregular shaped outline, in which the cooked egg products have a temperature of less than 30 degrees Centigrade.
47. (Withdrawn) A cooked egg product as in claim 46, in which the eggs are essentially all whole cooked eggs having intact yolks.
48. (Withdrawn) A cooked egg product as in claim 46, in which the eggs are essentially all whole cooked eggs having broken yolks.
49. (Withdrawn) A cooked egg product as in claim 46, in which the eggs are cooked scrambled eggs.
50. (Withdrawn) A cooked egg product as in claim 46, in which the eggs are cooked formulated egg products.
51. (Withdrawn) A cooked egg product as in claim 46, having a substantially planar bottom shape.
52. (Withdrawn) A cooked egg product as in claim 46, in which the plurality of egg products have an irregularly shaped surface having a height which varies irregularly over the surface, in which a substantial portion of the eggs have the same irregularly shaped surface.
53. (Withdrawn) A cooked egg product as in claim 46, having a raised height yolk portion surrounded by a lower height egg white portion.
54. (Withdrawn) A cooked egg product as in claim 53, in which the yolk is a formulated yolk.
55. (Currently Amended) A method for mass-producing cooked eggs, the method comprising:

depositing egg products having yolks into a plurality of molds, wherein the molds have a first depression including a first sloped region extending downwardly to a planed region, and a second depression disposed within the first depression, and the second depression including a second sloped region extending downwardly to a rounded region within the second depression;

allowing the yolks to settle into the second depression;

cooking the deposited egg products in the molds;

removing the cooked egg products from the molds; and

cooling the cooked egg products below 30 degrees Celsius.

56. (Original) A method as in claim 55, in which the egg product includes whole eggs, in which the depositing includes depositing the whole eggs.

57. (Withdrawn) A method as in claim 55, in which the egg product includes whole eggs having intact yolks, in which the depositing includes depositing the whole eggs having intact yolks.

58. (Withdrawn) A method as in claim 55, in which the egg product includes formulated eggs and the yolks are formulated yolks, in which the depositing includes depositing the formulated yolks into the second depression.

59. (Currently Amended) A method for making cooked whole eggs, the method comprising: mechanically conveying a plurality of whole eggs, the eggs having a shell and egg contents including an egg yolk and an egg white;

mechanically breaking the conveyed plurality of egg shells;

dropping the eggs through a device to break the yolk sac, wherein the device comprises a plurality of depressions including a plurality of segments having sharp edges and/or pointed portions to rupture the yolk sac, the segments are separated therebetween and extend downward to form an opening to allow the egg to pass through, orifices having sharp inwardly protruding edges and wherein the orifices are sized to spread the yolks to create the look of fried eggs having broken yolks;

allowing the egg contents to fall into a plurality of molds;

mechanically conveying the molds containing the egg contents into a heating area; and

cooking the egg contents in the molds.

60. (Original) A method as in claim 59, in which the mechanically egg conveying, egg breaking, and mold conveying include mechanisms selected from the group consisting of

pneumatic, electrical, magnetic, hydraulic, purely mechanical, and electro-mechanical mechanisms and combinations thereof.

61. (Original) A method as in claim 59, in which the mechanically conveying includes mechanically carrying each egg in an egg carrier.

62. (Original) A method as in claim 59, in which the egg shell mechanical breaking includes breaking the egg shell with a knife.

63. (Original) A method as in claim 59, in which the molds are joined together into a closed loop of linked molds, and in which the mold conveying includes moving the loop having the molds toward the heating area.

64. (Original) A method as in claim 59, in which the molds have an irregular shaped outline, such that cooked eggs have a resulting irregular shaped outline.

65. (Original) A method as in claim 59, in which the molds have an irregular shaped bottom surface, such that the cooked eggs have a resulting irregular shaped surface.

66. (Original) A method as in claim 59, in which the molds have a first depression and a second depression located within the first depression further comprising disposing the egg yolks in the second depression.

67. (Original) A method as in claim 59, in which the molds have a symmetrical outline, such that the cooked eggs have a symmetrical outline.

68. (Original) A method as in claim 59, in which the molds have a rounded outline, such that the cooked eggs have a rounded outline.

69 – 70. (Canceled)

71. (Currently Amended) A method for making cooked whole eggs having an egg shell and egg contents including egg yolk and egg white, the method comprising:

automatically conveying whole eggs to an egg breaking location;

automatically breaking the egg shells of the whole eggs;

dropping the eggs through a device to break the yolk sac, wherein the device comprises a plurality of depressions including a plurality of segments having sharp edges and/or pointed portions to rupture the yolk sac, the segments are separated therebetween and extend downward to form an opening to allow the egg to pass through, orifices having sharp inwardly protruding edges and wherein the orifices are sized to spread the yolks to create the look of fried eggs having broken yolks;

allowing the contents of one whole egg to fall into one mold;
automatically conveying each mold into a heating area; and
cooking the egg contents in each mold in the heating area.

72. (Previously Presented) The method for mass-producing cooked eggs according to claim 1 wherein the mold comprises a planar surface having a depression therein and wherein the depression has an irregularly shaped outline.
73. (Previously Presented) The method for mass-producing cooked eggs according to claim 72 wherein the depression outline is asymmetric about any vertical plane drawn through the planar surface and the depression.
74. (Previously Presented) The method for mass-producing cooked eggs according to claim 72 wherein the planar surface is formed of a non-stick, food grade material.
75. (Previously Presented) The method for mass-producing cooked eggs according to claim 72 wherein the mold comprises a plurality of depressions in the planar surface.
76. (Previously Presented) The method for mass-producing cooked eggs according to claim 72 wherein the depression has a flat bottom.
77. (Previously Presented) The method for mass-producing cooked eggs according to claim 72 wherein the depression has upwardly and outwardly beveled edges.
78. (Previously Presented) The method for mass-producing cooked eggs according to claim 72 wherein the mold include a bottom surface having an irregularly varying depth over the bottom surface.
79. (Previously Presented) The method for mass-producing cooked eggs according to claim 72 wherein the depression includes a first depression and a second depression disposed within the first depression.
80. (New) The method for mass-producing cooked eggs according to claim 1 wherein the depression is cut at the bottom to form the plurality of segments and the segments are bent downward to form the opening.
81. (New) The method for breaking egg yolks of claim 21 wherein the depression is cut at the bottom to form the plurality of segments and the segments are bent downward to form the opening.
82. (New) The method for mass-producing cooked eggs of claim 55, wherein the first depression and/or second depression has an irregular shaped outline.

83. (New) The method for making cooked whole eggs of claim 59, wherein the depression is cut at the bottom to form the plurality of segments and the segments are bent downward to form the opening.

84. (New) The method for making cooked whole eggs having an egg shell and egg contents including egg yolk and egg white of claim 71, wherein the depression is cut at the bottom to form the plurality of segments and the segments are bent downward to form the opening.